

The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association

Spring 2002 Newsletter

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ASSOCIATION NEWS by Les Allan, President & Honorary General Secretary.

SO WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE? Dr Lewis Moonie wrote that the ill-treatment of prisoners of war was the responsibility of individual guards, not of the German Government. This has to be one of the greatest examples of codswallop, or should we call it 'spin' to come from the mouth of a Minister of the Crown for many a year. I would draw his attention to The Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, adopted on 12th August 1949. Part 2 covers the General Protection of Prisoners of War and the first paragraph of Article 12 reads as follows: "Prisoners of war are in the hands of the enemy Power, but not of the individuals or military units who have captured them. Irrespective of the individual responsibilities that may exist, the Detaining Power is responsible for the treatment given them."

The responsibility for the ill-treatment and murder of prisoners of war rested in Berlin and it was to that city that many complaints were directed by the War Office following reports of prisoners being killed or ill-treated in German hands. For example, on 6th March 1943 the Director of Prisoners of War at the War Office wrote to the Foreign Office on the subject of 'Violent deaths and woundings of British Prisoners of War'.

"It is noted that in many recent cases of violent deaths or woundings information has been obtained, but that in certain other cases repeated requests for information addressed through the Protecting Power to the German Government have met with no response. It is therefore requested that the following communication may be made to the Protecting Power."

1. It appears to be useless to ask the Protecting Power to continue to press the cases of Ochs, Stern, Bekierman, Allen, McKay and Wood in view of the continued failure of the German Government to provide the information demanded.
2. They must therefore request the Protecting Power to convey to the German Government in a final manner their profound dissatisfaction and their reservation in these cases of the right to demand **compensation** for the relatives of the deceased prisoners of war and all other rights in connection with them, since the continued silence of the German Government must be taken as an indication of unwillingness either to investigate the cases or to communicate the results of any investigation that has been made.

COMPENSATION DEMANDED BY THE WAR OFFICE! Sergeant Jack, a prisoner of war at Stalag 21C/H was shot in the back by a guard and killed. The Army Council at the War Office sent a memo to the Foreign Office on 13th December 1941 requesting Mr Secretary Eden to make a strong protest through the Protecting Power to the German authorities and inform them that in due time a claim will be presented for monetary **compensation** to Sergeant Jack's relatives. Sixty years have

passed. So when will the claim for **compensation** be presented Mr Blair? Ref file WO311/141 in the PRO, Kew.

MEMBERS FEEDBACK. Charlie Jago wrote in after reading one of the items in the Winter Newsletter under the heading 'Treatment on the March.' It read; "Private Frank Lofthouse, British POW number 19721, who marched with a column of prisoners from Graudenz. 'My comrades and I had to sleep 3 nights out in open fields on 2 feet of snow and 19 degrees of frost. In 21 days we never received a hot meal. We had to march 25 to 30 kilometres a day. Sick men were forced to carry on for 21 days without attention. I have seen a British Medical Officer (Capt Sapsford, RAMC) beaten by a guard with the butt of a rifle while he was sick. Red Cross Report Stalag 2A Feb 45."

Charlie was in the same working party as Frank and would like to hear from him again if he is out there. He told us that on 20th January 1945, hundreds of prisoners of war were brought into the camp and the following day were all marched out, being told that they were going to another camp. They said the march would only take eight days, but ten went by before they arrived at the empty US POW camp at Hammerstein. They spent a couple of days there before continuing the march to Hildesheim, which they reached three and a half months later. During that period they slept in open fields with an occasional night in an old barn. A friend on the working party, Rifleman Jack Wilcock of the 7th Bn KRRC was shot and killed by a Jerry Unterofficer upon arrival at Hildesheim and he is buried in the Berlin War Cemetery. Charlie escaped from Hildesheim and made his way to the American lines and after a few days was flown home.

PAYOUT TO FAR EAST PRISONERS – THE COST SO FAR. Dr Moonie made an announcement on 8th January 2002 about the ex-gratia scheme to make payments of £10,000 to those held by the Japanese during the Second World War. As at 21st December 2001, there had been 22,794 payments made at a total cost of £227,940,000. At the same time there had been a total of 4,019 applications rejected, of which 1,097 were on the grounds of nationality.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS ON CRETE. For the benefit of Dr Moonie and others in the current government we would like to include this letter from Mr Doug Arthur, to illustrate how well the Germans fed our prisoners of war on Crete. "I was taken on Crete and was detained in Galatas. I broke out of the compound three times, to beg or buy food from the Cretans in Chania and had to find a way to get back into the camp with the proceeds. On the last occasion when I and my companion returned with our pockets full of raisins and rice we found that the guards had been increased, presenting a bigger problem on how to get back inside without being spotted. The opportunity to duck under the barbed wire came when we heard a rifle shot and saw the guards running towards a man on the ground. I believe he was a Kiwi trying to get out of the camp but I can't say for sure and I don't remember what happened to him. I think he was badly wounded in the leg."

ASSOCIATION NEWS by Les Allan, Honorary General Secretary.

Contact address 99 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. Tel/Fax 01753-818308.

In order to further our claim for equal treatment with Far East Prisoners of War, I will be asking our local MP Fiona MacTaggart to present the following Petition to the House of Commons:

The Petition of Mr Leslie Allan, Honorary Secretary and Founder of the National Ex-Prisoner of War Association, and other ex-prisoners of war held in German camps,

Declares that he was taken prisoner and held captive by Nazi Germany between May 1940 and May 1945; that during that period he suffered ill-treatment contrary to the Hague Convention on the Laws and Customs of War on Land; that his fellow petitioners suffered similar ill-treatment during their captivity; that a letter to him from the German Embassy, dated 23rd January 2002, acknowledges this fact in stating that "many prisoners of war were not treated by the Nazi regime in accordance with international law, and as a result suffered damage"; that the letter further states "Damage incurred as a result of the actions of a country at war – including damage incurred by prisoners of war – is normally settled through reparation agreements between the states concerned. No such agreements came about in the post-war period. The victorious Allied Powers have, however, received substantial reparation payments from Germany"; and that no compensation out of such reparations has been paid to ex-prisoners of war held in German camps in respect of the ill-treatment they suffered when held prisoner.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to review its policy on the compensation of ex-prisoners of war ill-treated in German camps, and to accord them equal treatment with ex-prisoners of war held in Japanese camps.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.

It is hoped that enough Members of Parliament will sign the Petition and thereby persuade the Government to review its policy on affording us equal treatment with the Far East Prisoners of War. All members are encouraged to contact their local MP and ask him or her to support the Petition. (Petition was presented to the House at 10pm on 10th April.)

POTTERS BAR PRISONER OF WAR MEMORIAL. A memorial commemorating prisoners of war who died in the Second World War is to be refurbished by Hertsmere Borough Council who intend to spend up to £40,000 to improve the area surrounding the memorial, in front of St Marys Church in Mutton Lane. Work should be completed by the summer. The names on the memorial are Private Donald Lewis (2nd SAS) who was murdered by the SS after capture in France in 1944; Private Ian Sherwood, Gordons and Lance Sergeant Herbert Jacob, LAA, RA, both buried in Burma; Aircraftman Thomas Roberts who died in Indonesia in June 1945; Driver Sydney Le Good, RASC; Lance Corporal Harold Eke, Norfolks; Gunner Albert Wignall, A/T Regt RA and Sapper Arthur Parr. Friends or relatives are invited to contact Mr Dave Clarke at Hertsmere Council Civic Offices, Elstree Way, Borehamwood, Herts WD6 1WA. Phone 0208-207-7519. A note from the editor; This Council has my vote! Do you have any prisoner of war memorials in your area?

SUBS REMINDER. The 2002 annual subscription was due on 1st January. Late comers are still welcome – we overspent at Christmas too! £5 for former prisoners of war living in the UK and £10 for those living overseas or for Associate members. Please make cheques payable to NEXPOWA and send to Les Allan at 99 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. Tel 01753-818308. DO YOU KNOW A FORMER PRISONER OF WAR WHO IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE

ASSOCIATION? Let us know and we will send the recruiting sergeant round with a membership form.

OBITUARIES. We regret to report the passing away of Basil Keeble on 3rd May last. He was taken prisoner on Crete while serving with 189 Field Ambulance RAMC and was a former resident of Lamsdorf. We would like to say a special welcome to his daughter Audrey who is joining us as an Associate member. If anyone remembers Basil would they like to write to Mrs Audrey Southgate at 362, Sidegate Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 3EG. Mr Richard Hall of the 4th Green Howards passed away in Redcar on 13th July. Associate member Mrs Kathleen Jean Clark from Essex passed away on 28th December. We would like to thank Angela and David Wild and John Clark for their kind donations in memorium. Graham King in Devon has advised us that his wife Marjorie passed away on 7th February. Mr Frank Gleeson passed away at his home in France last September. Former Fusilier Thomas Douglas passed away in Northumberland on 10th February.

DONATIONS. We would like to thank the following for their kind donations to the welfare fund. All contributions great and small are welcome. Mr Doug Arthur £15, Archie Balmer \$Cdn20, Mr Jack Batt £35, Kathleen Bolam £20, Mr John Borland £50, Col P G M Callan, BSc £50, Mr J Charters £15, Mr Ben van Drogenbroek £10, Mr Ray Folwell £10, Mr C Henstridge £20, Margaret Hume £10, Bill James \$Cdn75, W J Jeal £100, Mrs E Jenson £10 in memorium, M E Jones £45, S T Lake £6, Mrs D Lamisong £20, Mr Richard Marshall £5, W Milne £5, Mr Morse £10, Mr Douglas Nelson £95, Lew Parsons £10, Mr Ernie Parrish £25, Mr D Andrew Ramsay £10, Mrs Pat Ramsay £5, Mrs Marian Rickman £50, Mr Ted Sankey £15, Mr Arthur Smith £15, Mrs J M Snell £10, Mr Harry Tooze £15, Mr Robert Ward £10, Mrs Y Winson £10, Mr Fred Withey £50, Mr Dennis Worthing £5. We must give a special mention to our comrades in The Guards for their kind donations; Warrington, North Cheshire Brigade of Guards Association £110, Manchester Branch of the Guards Household Division £25, Mr Len Easton, Chairman of the Warrington Branch, Guards Household Division £25. **More to follow next issue.**

GATHERING OF PRISONERS OF WAR. As previously mentioned there will be a gathering of prisoners of war on 21st June for a garden party at Doxford Hall, Chathill in Northumberland. Any former POW from any theatre of war will be welcome. Accommodation possible. We will be occupying a marquee and look forward to meeting any members who attend. Details can be obtained direct from the organiser Mr Brian Burnie, Doxford Hall, Chathill, Northumberland NE67 5DN. Tel 0191-2615135.

NEW MEMBERS. We would like to welcome the following new members to the association; **Mr Dennis Worthing**, RAF who was a resident of Stalag Luft 7 and Stalag 3A. **Mr Bob James** now living in Canada, a former resident of Stalag 20A who was taken prisoner at St Valery. **Mr Jack Marshall** and his son **Richard**. **Mr Ted Burke** who fell in the bag in Tunisia while serving with the Royal Irish Fusiliers. **Mr Douglas Nelson**, a former resident of Stalag 20A. **Mr Bert Whittington** who was captured in Italy in November 1943 while on patrol with the 1st Bn London Irish. **Mr Harry Garner** of the Royal Leicestershire Regt, taken prisoner in Norway and a former resident of Stalag 20B, arbeids kommando 294. **Mr J Charters** who was taken prisoner at St Valery and is a former resident of Stalag 9C. **Mr Ernie Parrish** from 155/52nd LAA Regt and a former resident of Stalag 4A. **Mr Francis Spencer**, a prisoner in the Far East. **Mr Doug Arthur**, a former resident of Galatas on Crete and Stalag 18A. **Mr John A Procter** formerly Royal Armoured Corps and Stalag 4A. **Mr Arthur Cottrell** from 58th LAA, RA who was taken prisoner at Calais and was a resident of Stalag

8B/344. We would like to say a loud 'Well Done' to member **Mr Geoff Bryden** in Glasgow who deserves full marks for his recruiting efforts amongst the St Valery veterans

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS. **Mrs S Roberts** whose father was in Stalag 8C. **Margaret Hume** whose father was in Campo 53 and Stalag 4C. **Mr Raymond Folwell** whose father Eric was taken prisoner in Tobruk in June 1942. **Mrs D Lamisong** whose Sapper father was a resident of Stalag 20A. **Kathleen Bolam** whose father was in Campo 53 and Stalag 4B. **Mrs Mona Maka-Cockerell** who represents us in the British community in Lille. **Mr D Andrew Ramsay** whose uncle was a Captain in the Kings Regiment and a prisoner of war in Burma. **Professor Bernard de Neumann**, whose father together with other officers from the Royal Navy prize SS Criton were convicted of piracy by a Vichy French Naval Court Martial and imprisoned in Conakry, Timbuctoo and KanKan in Vichy West Africa in 1941. **Mr Bernard Tingley.** **Mr Michael Booker** who is editor of the Colditz Society newsletter. **Mrs Freda L Clark.** **Mrs Jean Morris** whose father was a former resident at Stalag 20B Marienburg. **Mr Frank Sinnott** whose uncle Edward Sinnott was taken prisoner at St Nazaire. **Mrs Jennifer Snell**, daughter of Driver Thomas Robinson. **Mr Ian Cameron** whose brother was a resident of Marlag and Milag Nord. **Mrs Susan Collins** whose father was a resident of Campo 70 and Stalag 4B. **Mrs Patricia Ramsay.** **Mrs Sylvia Wilson.** Welcome to the Association.

Associate Members might like to note that an Associates Badge is available from Charlie Jago our Quartermaster on 01722-333599. We would also like to see more Associate members at the Annual Reunion in October. Treat your Kriegie relative to a weekend away or if he is no longer around, come anyway. All our members are only too pleased to chat about the 'good old days' especially if there is some beer involved.

BEST WISHES. We would like to send our best wishes to Stan Holdway who is now in a nursing home and his wife Pat in Enfield. Stan was a Gunner in the Royal Artillery and is a former resident of Stalag 18A in Austria. Also to Tom Jagger our former Treasurer who is making progress in his nursing home in Camberley following a stroke.

REQUEST from Flt Lt Ken Jackson our Welfare Officer. Does anyone have a khaki WWII forage cap (chip cap) size about Seven and three-quarters that we can use on the Menin Gate parades in Belgium? If you can help please contact Ken at 29 Highwood Avenue, Booker, High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 4LS. Tel 01494-436978.

ASSOCIATION REUNION REPORT. The 2001 NEXPOWA Reunion was held at Warners Lakeside Holiday Centre on the weekend of 5th-8th October with 167 attendees. The accommodation and half board cost was £103 per person and chalet keys were distributed from 1500 hours on the Friday. When all were settled in the evening meal took place, followed by entertainment until after midnight. On the Saturday the ladies went off on a shopping trip while the annual meeting took place. The board of officers was re-elected and various items were discussed. It was announced that the Devon and Cornwall Branch would close down due to falling membership. The branch was formed in 1988 and at its height had 200 members. Branch President Jack Driscoll and his colleagues will of course keep up to date with prisoner of war affairs through this newsletter. We would like to thank the branch for their kind donation of £500. It will be put to good use. Again the evening meal was followed by entertainment, until late.

The Sunday parade had to be cancelled due to atrocious weather, but the church service went ahead in the Hayling Island Royal British Legion Club, courtesy of Mr C Wrixton, Legion

Chairman. Wreaths were laid at the altar, to be transferred to the War Memorial when the weather improved.

A raffle was held, with prizes supplied by the reunion account and some were donated by members and attendees. A free holiday weekend was also kindly donated by Warners.

The 2002 Reunion will take place at the same venue over the weekend 4th-7th October, cost £107 per person. All members, associate members, adult family members and friends are invited to contact Mr Charlie Jago on 01722-333599 to reserve your places. A small party of former Merchant Navy POWs may also attend. The more the merrier.

A video tape was made of the reunion by DJM Video Productions, cost £15 including postage and packing. To order a copy ring 01425-475415.

A note from Phil Chinnery: I was pleased to see two authors at the reunion; Mr Robert W Calvey, author of 'Name, Rank and Number' - copies still available at £14 each. Also Pauline Bevan, author of 'Travels with a Leros Veteran' together with Dad Lemuel. Thanks to all members who took the time to chat to me about their experiences. A special thank you also to Mr Stephen Cotton, General Manager of Warners Lakeside Classic Resort who personally contributed £100 to the welfare fund.

STALAG 4B VISIT REPORT by Lew Parsons. "On 6th September 2001 a group of the Stalag 4B Ex-POW Association made up of RAF and Army ex-Kriegies, wives, widows and families, 90 people in all, flew from Stansted to Berlin to stay overnight. The next day saw a visit to the Charlottenberg War Graves Cemetery and an onward journey to the site of the Stalag 4B camp at Muhlberg-am-Elbe.

"In the Cemetery we had time to search out the graves of old comrades that had died in Stalag 4B and had originally been buried in Neuburxdorf Cemetery and moved after the end of the war. Small wooden crosses with the names inscribed and poppies attached were supplied by Tony Drewitt for us to mark each grave and several members were very touched to see their air-crew members or army comrades graves for the first time and have the opportunity to pay their respects. A service was held by Reverend Whelton in the cemetery and a wreath was laid on the plinth by the oldest and youngest present, Rodney Hatfield aged 88 and Jemma Drewitt aged 9.

"There followed three more days where we were entertained by our German hosts and taken by coaches to see the remains of the camp in its reclaimed state after the clearance work of the Initiative Group of Muhlberg, then to Jacobsthal, a small concentration camp where some of the Army members were incarcerated in 1943-44, to Zeitain nearby, and to Colditz about 20 miles from Muhlberg.

"Wreaths of Poppies were laid at Memorial Services held at Charlottenberg in Berlin, at the French erected Memorial in Neuburxdorf Cemetery and at the Memorial Cross erected by the Germans to commemorate those that died in Internment Lager No1 NKVD as the camp became under the Russians from 1945 to 1948.

"The visit was organised by the son of one of our members Tony Drewitt in co-operation with the Burgermeisterin (Mayoress) of Muhlberg, Frau Hannalore Brendel and the Initiative Group of Muhlberg. A plaque from the RCAF members in Calgary, Canada and an aluminium cigarette case made by a Russian prisoner for Flt.Sgt Alf Restarick was presented to Frau Brendel for the Muhlberg Museum."

The 2002 Stalag 4B Reunion will take place in Peterborough on the 19th-21st April 2002. Contact Lew Parsons on 01268-527524 for further information.

HISTORIANS NEWS by Phil Chinnery.

10, Lambert Avenue, Langley, Berkshire SL3 7EB.

Email PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk

Arthur Smith recently mentioned an incident that took place while he was on the 1940 march into captivity. At one rest halt he wrote a quick letter to his fiancée Jean and gave it to two nuns who were walking by, with a request that they try to get it to England for him. The nun who accepted the letter said 'I am very sorry my son, but I will try'. The letter actually arrived before the official telegram telling his parents he was a prisoner of war. He has always wondered how that loving nun got it to Jean. Arthur married Jean on 1st June 1945 and his daughter still has the letter.

Gregor MacIntosh who served with 4th Seaforths has written in to tell me about a tunnel escape from **Stalag 9C** on 25th March 1943. 55 men got away, although nearly all were recaptured. Gregor was recaptured at Obermassfeld station when the freight car he was hiding in developed bogie trouble. The train was heading for Ulm on the Swiss border. Does anyone have any more information on the escape? Are any of the other 54 escapees out there?

A **Thank You** to Brian Sims for the copies of POW-WOW, the New Zealand Ex-POW Association Newsletter. We are still looking for a number of issues to complete our archive set. If you have any at home gathering dust, please let us know. We are also starting an archive collection of BARBED WIRE AND BAMBOO, the newsletter of the Australian Ex-POW Association. Can our members Down Under help us out here? **Thank You** to Ted Sankey for the Stalag 8B photos. We will be including some in future issues of the newsletter. **Thank You** also to Robert Ward and Henry Owens who sent in copies of their memoirs for our archives. Robert served with the Green Howards and was a resident of Campo 73 in Italy and Stalag 8B in Germany. Henry was captured at St Valery and endured the two long marches. **Thank You** to Peter Liddle for the photographs of the September 2001 visit to Stalag 4B. **Thank You** to Audrey Neal for the March 1943 copy of Prisoner of War newspaper. Are any more out there? **Thank you** also to Michael Booker for the copies of the Colditz Society newsletters and list of books written about the camp. **Thank you** also to George Martin for the details of his time on the run in Italy. Were any other members sent out on working parties in Italy?

CAMP PLANS. We are trying to compile a set of plans or diagrams of each of the German, Austrian, Italian or Japanese prisoner of war camps. We have a couple already, of Stalag 4B, Stalag 8B/344 Lamsdorf, Stalag 7A Moosburg, Stalag Luft 3 Sagan (North compound). Are any more out there, whether hand drawn or produced by technical drawing experts?

SALONICA CAMP IN GREECE. New member Doug Arthur would like to borrow a photo of the dreadful Salonica camp and a 40men/8horses cattle truck for a book he is working on. If you could assist please contact Phil Chinnery, address above.

Caption Correction. I must correct the caption to the photograph which appeared on the front cover of the Winter 2001 Newsletter. The plant at Brux which was bombed by both American and

British aircraft was the Sudetenlandische Treibstoff Werke (Hermann Goring Works), a coal hydrogenation plant involved in the processing of oil from coal. It was protected by 266 anti-aircraft guns. There were three chimneys in the centre of the target, nicknamed Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin. The first raid took place on 12th July 1944 and during the second on 21st July 6 British POWs were killed and 21 were injured. At least a dozen raids took place until the last raid in April 1945 by RAF Lancasters put an end to the plants production. The holding stalag for the British slave labourers was Stalag 4C Wistritz.

ARBEITS KOMMANDO NEWS. We would welcome details of your working party. What was the number, where was it and what work was done there? Can you remember any particular incidents or characters? We have yet to hear from anyone who was on a working party in Italy.....and photos are always welcome.

A1498GW Stalag 17A Kaisersteinbruck Austria. Ted Burke wrote in from Australia: "I was taken prisoner in Tunisia in April 1943 while serving with the Royal Irish Fusiliers. After a short spell in Campo 66 I was sent to Campo 53 near Macerata. When 'Musso' packed in I walked out of this camp and tried to make my way solo to southern Italy. After a few adventures I was recaptured and sent to Stalag 7A Moosburg near Munich and then after a short spell to Stalag 17A at Kaisersteinbruck in Austria.

"The barracks we were housed in were used by the old Austrian-Hungarian Army from 1868 as a cavalry barracks and then by the Austrian army as a POW camp during the First World War. After the Anschluss the area was taken over by the German army. In 1940 it was again used as a POW camp, first for the French, Polish, Belgian, Russian and Yugoslavian prisoners of war and from 1943 British POWs. There was never more than 1,000 British there at any time, most of the other ranks were sent out on arbeits kommandos to work on various projects. The conditions at Stalag 17A were poor except we were after a time issued occasionally with Red Cross parcels.

"For the Russian POWs life was really grim and over 9,500 died there between 1941 and 1945, mostly from starvation and lack of medical treatment. A big metal box cart drawn by two horses used to be sent round the Russian POW barracks every morning to collect the corpses. This sight I will never forget, to realise that a so called civilised country as Germany, could treat human beings like they did.

"I was sent out to working camp A1498GW. It was a construction site for an electricity sub-station situated near the small town of Rohrau, about 40 kilometres from Vienna, near to the Hungarian frontier. The work was intensive manual labour and we worked from 6am to 6pm every day except Sunday. We were housed in wooden barracks on-site, guarded at all times by the German Wehrmacht. The sleeping quarters were enclosed by barbed wire and the barracks were locked after the evening meal, with no sanitation facilities until 5am the next morning. The winter nights were terrible with only a mattress stuffed with paper cuttings and one blanket, the cold winds sweeping in from the Hungarian Plains did not make life easy

"Ten days before the war ended I escaped from there and made my way through Hungary and Yugoslavia to Klagenfurt in Southern Austria, near the Italian frontier, where I contacted British Forces." [A note from the editor. Before his trip to Tunisia, Ted was wounded at Dunkirk, but managed to get back to England.]

E51 Hindenburg Coal Mine. Glad to hear from Bill Crighton in Aberdeen who is recovering well from a bypass and some plumbing work on his heart. Bill was in work camp E51, under Stalag 344 Lamsdorf. "Originally we all worked at the Hindenburg mine but were all transferred to the Adolf Grube after I had been there a year. I believe our place at the Hindenburg was taken by Russian POWs, but we had little contact as the guards barracks, kitchens etc were between the two parts.

“Conditions in the Adolf mine were not particularly good, as underground the coal face was only about 3 feet high and on quite a steep slope. I developed the equivalent of Housemaids Knee due to being on my knees for long spells. Fortunately I was able to get a transfer on top to the electrical workshops.

“As regards smoking, some of the camp commandants were particularly brutal, and smoking while mustering to leave camp seemed to upset some. It may be that they did not have as good cigarettes as the POWs especially after the Red Cross parcels arrived! On one occasion we had a particularly nasty commandant who used to rouse us at any time on the pretence of a fire etc and on this occasion he unusually arrived as we were mustering to leave for the mine at 5am and one of the POWs came running to join the parade with a cigarette in his mouth, when without warning the commandant pulled out his pistol and shot him dead. His body was left on the parade ground until we arrived back after our shift. On another occasion one of the guards took exception when one of us was a bit late in putting out our cigarettes and shot him. These were the only two incidents of anyone being shot in the camp, the other times being whilst we were on the long march before liberation.”

From Bert Martin; “It may be of interest to someone out there who was at Obermassfeld Lazaret (Stalag 9C, Kdo 1249) to know that Padre D G Smith who was the C of E Chaplain with us for almost the entire ‘life’ of the place as a pseudo-hospital, died in September having reached the age of 93. He had survived surgery for mastoiditis in the later stages of the war, following a young American airman, even occupying the same bed left vacant when that patient died whilst being operated on for exactly the same condition!”

CAMP SECURITY - APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT. Have you ever heard of Camp Security? It was a Revolutionary War POW camp near the city of York, Pennsylvania in the newly founded United States of America. It was occupied by 1500 British prisoners of war and their families between 1781 and 1783. The first prisoners to occupy the camp were General John Burgoyne's troops that had been captured at Saratoga in 1777. In the Autumn of 1781 they built a stockade and living quarters on the 270 acre farm taken for the camp. Early in 1782 they were joined by troops from Cornwallis's army that had been recently captured at Yorktown.

The camp was run by the York County militia, who often sympathised with their prisoners and only loosely guarded the camp. The Continental Congress had no money to feed or clothe its military prisoners and a parole system allowed prisoners to work for local residents, thereby supplementing the camp's meagre supply of food, clothing and blankets. Wives and children accompanied many of the prisoners, a common practice at that time. A fever hit the camp in the winter of 1781-82 killing many prisoners and family members who were buried in a graveyard near the camp. A property developer plans to dig up the land and build houses, despite the fact that the area includes the burial site of some of the prisoners. We plan to appeal to the Government to put their weight behind the campaign to halt this desecration of prisoner of war graves.

ROYAL AIR FORCE NEWS.

We have been advised of the sad death of Group Captain Frank Jensen who joined us in 1998. Our thoughts are with his widow Eileen. Frank was shot down in October 1943, flying a rocket-firing Typhoon while on an operation to blow up the power station at Caen, probably the heaviest-defended town in Northern France. He was not at all surprised that he and two others were shot down. The briefing officer insisted that they follow the railway line to Caen, whereas Frank wanted to approach cross-country. He said that all the signal boxes along the line would be ringing Caen ‘Six Typhoons coming up!’ and that is probably what happened, judging by the flak which met them.

One small item of discontent that Frank shared with other RAF ex-Kriegies in Germany ought to be mentioned, in view of our current compensation campaign. In the early days POWs were issued with Lager Geld, 'Prison Money' with which to buy sundries in the camp canteens. The cost of this was deducted from POW's pay by the British Government, to reimburse the Germans. By the time some of the men were locked up there were no canteens or Lager Geld. Yet after the war the government refused to repay the one-third pay they had deducted.

BILL REID VC. A service is to be held at 12 noon on 9th April at St Clement Danes Church, Strand, London in memory of Bill Reid, VC, who died in November. Bill was awarded the Victoria Cross following a mission on 3rd November 1943. He was piloting a 61 Squadron Lancaster on a raid to Dusseldorf when they were attacked by a Me110 as they crossed the Dutch coast. The windscreen of the bomber was shattered and the cockpit, flying controls and gun turrets were badly damaged. Bill was seriously wounded in the head, hands and shoulders. He continued towards the target and was attacked again by a FW190 and this time the navigator was killed and the wireless operator fatally wounded. Bill was hit again in his right arm. Despite this, Bill flew on for a further 200 miles and bombed the target. The return trip was freezing due to the smashed screen, but by navigating by the stars they crossed the North Sea and made a crash landing back at their base.

Following a stay in hospital Bill was posted to 617 Squadron. On a mission in July 1944 his aircraft was struck by a bomb from an aircraft flying 6,000 feet above him and the crew had to bail out. They spent the next ten months as prisoners of war in Stalag 3A Luckenwalde.

FAR EAST NEWS.

JACK CHALKER AUCTION. A unique collection of paintings and studies depicting one mans epic journey through the Japanese labour camps will be auctioned by Bonhams on 16th April at New Bond Street, London. The artist Jack Chalker recorded the horrific conditions, which he and fellow prisoners of war suffered while working on the Burma Railway. Chalker studied painting at the Royal College of Art, London, but was called up and sent to Singapore where he was captured with 137,000 other troops in February 1942. Sent to the Kanyu River and Hintok camps to work on the railway, he succumbed to dysentery combined with an attack of dengue fever six months later. The next two and a half years were spent in hospital camps until the Japanese surrender in August 1945.

In a series of watercolours, monochrome washes, pen, pencil and ink drawings the artist has captured some of the most unimaginable and unforgettable scenes of his life. Recording the adverse conditions was strictly forbidden and infringement was punished with savage penalties.

More than 100 paintings and studies by Jack Chalker are expected to reach up to £80,000 when auctioned in the Bonhams sale of Topographical Pictures on 16th April 2002. Ring Giles Peppiatt on 0207-393-3963 or email g.peppiatt@bonhams.com for further details.

Associate member Mr D Andrew Ramsay, 4 Loud View Terrace, Greencroft, Stanley, County Durham DH9 8PG is searching for a copy of the Penguin Book 'Hells Bonfire'. His uncle was involved in the building of the Burma railway and wrote the book. Can anyone assist him in his search?

Lieutenant Colonel John F Delaney, US Army Retired recently wrote to us from America to tell us that at the Fort Sheridan, Illinois cemetery there is the grave of Private Cyril H Evans of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. He was liberated from a Japanese POW camp but died at Camp Grant and was buried at the Fort Sheridan cemetery on 26th October 1945. John tells us that the graves are well maintained and visited on a daily basis.

Jason Neate is seeking anyone who knew his grandfather BQMS Charles Neate, 7th Coast Regiment, RA. Taken prisoner at Singapore he joined H Force in May 1943 working on the Thailand-Burma railway and was at Tonchan, Hintok and Konkuita camps in Thailand up to December 1943 when he returned to Sime Road camp and then Changi Gaol until the surrender. Phone 01223-463955.

FREEDOM GATE – KOREA.

A former South Korean soldier who was captured during the 1950-53 Korean War has returned home after fleeing the North, the South Korean government announced on Saturday 17th November 2001. The 67 year old man recently arrived in South Korea along with 18 North Koreans who had fled the country. The man was taken prisoner during a battle in central Korea and spent most of his life toiling in coal mines. Over the years 23 South Korean prisoners of war have returned home after escaping from the North, usually via China. South Korea believes that the North still holds 300 prisoners of war, almost 50 years since the war ended. There is no peace treaty between the two sides and the border remains closed.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

The addresses of members seeking information have been removed. If you can assist with any of the enquiries below please contact the newsletter editor Mr Phil Chinnery at 10 Lambert Avenue, Langley, Berkshire SL3 7EB.

Margaret Hume of London would like to hear from anyone who may have known her later father **Trooper Frank Willmer** (Bill/Will) of the 3rd County of London Yeomanry, or who may have been in the same camps. He was taken prisoner at Sidi Rezegh in November 1941 and was a resident of Campo 53 and later Stalag 4C, Lager 22 and Arbeitskommando W607. Also looking for Rifleman Robert Hallam who was in Stalag 4A. He had a sister named Lily in Hendon NW4.

Jean McIver in New Zealand is seeking information on Arbeitskommando 10001 **Ruckenwaldau** (Stalag 8A Gorkitz). In particular how and why the men here were caught in a cross fire between the Russian and German armies on 9th February 1945. She would like to contact Pte W Atkinson 107091 RASC and Dvr J Powell 162444 RASC or the relatives of a British soldier 'Fry' who died at Ruckenwaldau. Does anyone remember her uncle Les (Mac) McIver, a New Zealander, who was at Ruckenwaldau, formerly at Campo 57, 65 and 85 and was on the Jason when it was torpedoed?

Mr Jim Crouch in Essex would like to contact anyone who knew his late father **Rifleman James 'Nobby' Crouch** from the 2nd Bn Kings Royal Rifle Corps, captured at Calais in May 1940 and a resident of BAB21.

Ms Kathy Salt would like to know if anyone remembers her uncle **Gunner Jack Salt**, 30HA from Derbyshire, captured in Sumatra in 1941. He spent the rest of the war as a prisoner of the Japanese and died in South Africa in 1946.

Mr Neil Pudneys father was a member of **133 Field Ambulance** who came home from Dunkirk. Many of his friends in 131 and 132 Field Ambulance were not so lucky and became prisoners of war. Neil would like to hear from any survivors of the above units, as part of his research for a book on 44th Div Field Ambulances 1938-40.

Gunner John McLaney of 155 LAA Battery (Burnley Territorials) was on the march from Stalag 8B when he died and was buried somewhere in **Itzum near Hildesheim** in Germany on 23rd March 1945. The previous day most of Hildesheim was destroyed by bombing. His two daughters have never been able to discover the location of his grave, believed to be in a Catholic churchyard. If anyone can help please contact Jack Horsfall, via Phil Chinnery.

Ted Burke in Australia would like to hear from anyone who was in **Stalag 17A** in Austria, especially if you were in arbeits kommando A1498GW at Rohrau on the Austrian-Hungarian frontier.

Mrs S Rogers in Cornwall would like to hear from any former Stalag 8C Sagan residents who may have known her late father **Lance Sergeant N A Keeler** or who was in the same stalag.

Fred Walker in Yorkshire would like to hear from anyone who was in **Stalag 20A** Thorn in November 1940. His uncle Len died there on the 9th.

Alice Giunta in New Jersey, USA would like to hear from anyone who may have known her late father **Horace 'Paddy' Johnson** who escaped from Stalag 20B Marienberg with the assistance of Eddie Rankmore.

Mrs D Lamisong in Herts would like to hear from anyone who may remember her late father **Sapper Robert Charles Lane** who was in Stalag 20A Thorn. He joined the TA in 1920 and was captured at Lille.

Mr Ray Folwell in Derby would like to hear from anyone who may remember his late father **Gunner Eric Folwell** who was captured in Tobruk in June 1942. A resident of Campo 53 at Macerata and Stalag 4G, he was in a small work camp at Bad Lausick near Leipzig on railway maintenance.

Sapper Bob James who was captured at St Valery and a resident in Stalag 20A is now living in Canada and would like to hear from anyone who may remember him.

Kathleen Bolam in Newcastle on Tyne would like to hear from anyone who knew her father **Bombardier Robert Tuck**, Royal Artillery. He was captured by the Germans at Bir Hacheim on 15th June 1942 and handed over to the Italians. He was taken to a transit camp, Sunarpi Ben Aden, on 26th June. On 21st October he boarded a coal boat to Italy where he was held in a transit camp, possibly at Capua, until taken to Campo 53 where he remained until late 1943. The final years of the war were spent in Stalag 4B. Even if you did not know Bob Tuck, but were in any of the camps Kathleen would be pleased to hear from you.

Mr Ian Brown who runs the excellent **Stalag 18A** website would like to correspond with anyone who was a resident of that camp. He is compiling a list of all former residents.

Does anyone remember **Kenneth George Bamford** from Bristol? He served in the RASC, 22nd Armoured Brigade. A resident of Campo 73 near Modena from Sept 42 to Sept 43 and then Stalag 4A. He was in a warehouse arbeids kommando at Reisa from Oct 43 to April 45.

Mr M Burdess in County Durham asks if anyone knew his late father **Lance Corporal (Jack) John Henry Burdess** who enlisted in the Durham Light Infantry and was posted to the 6th Battalion in February 1938. He was taken prisoner in France in May 1940 and was a resident of Stalag 20 Thorn.

Gunner Ernie Parrish from 155/52nd LAA Regiment is looking for Gunners Johnnie Betts and Alan McIlroy and anyone from **Stalag 4A** and later from arbeids kommando 288 Pirna June 42-May 45.

Lee Riddiough is looking for the owner of a Bible lost in 1945. It belonged to **Maurice Beason** a Royal Navy Stoker, service number C/KX94578, prisoner of war number 450 and registered to Stalag 344 Lamsdorf. He lived at 51 Reginald Road, Alum Rock, Birmingham 8. Please contact Phil Chinnery or Lee by email at appy@pld.com

Mrs Freda Clark in Fife would like to hear from anyone who remembers her father-in-law **Private Cedric 'Nobby' Clark** from 1/7th Royal Warwickshire Regiment, taken prisoner near Ypres in May 1940. He was resident in Forts 13, 14 and 17 at Thorn and a member of working parties at Rittal, Schulitz and Steindorf (road building), Reisenburg (sugar factory), Juttland (farm work) and Lappin (sand cliff).

Mr Frank Sinnott in Lancashire would like to hear from anyone who may recall his uncle **Edward Sinnott** of the South Lancs Regiment, who was serving with No 2 Commando when he was taken prisoner at St Nazaire. He was resident in Stalag 357 Oerbke near Fallingbomel at the end of the war and made an escape bid from a camp near/in Sternberg in April 1943.

Mrs Jennifer Snell in Cumbria would like to hear from anyone who knew her late father Driver Thomas Maurice Robinson who was taken prisoner in Greece in April 1941 and was a resident of **Stalag 18A Wolfsberg**. Others with him were A Taunton, J McLean, Lawrence Homshaw, Harold Strong, Bernard Gibson, G L Healey, C Garratt, Gordon Farr, E W Davidson, M E Ellis, John Blair, A Jones, H C Wells, J McDougall, Donald Alexander, C P Moore, L J Pye, A Joudge. Does anyone know any of these fellows?

Mr Ian Cameron in East Sussex would like to purchase a genuine dog-tag/identity disc from a former resident of **Marlag and Milag Nord**. Ians brother was a prisoner in the camp.

Mrs Susan Collins in Suffolk would like to hear from anyone who remembers her father **Corporal George Gilpin Miniken** who was captured at Deir-El-Shein in Egypt on 1st July 1942. He was a resident of Campo 70 and 146 and Stalag 4B and 4D.

Private Harry Garner of 1/5th Bn Royal Leicestershire Regiment was taken prisoner in Norway 27th April 1940 and sent to Stalag 20B Marienburg, **arbeits kommando 294 Altfelde**. He would like to hear from his old comrades. He sent in a photo of members of the kommando. A few of his comrades names that come to mind; Butcher, Sinden, Claydon, Elliott, Archer, Balantyne, Lovell, Mitchell, Pepper, Marshal, Smith, Anson, Fairfield, Lomas, Preston, Oakes and Seaman. He escaped with Steve Elliott and Harry Anson in March 1945 and met up with the Yanks in April in Oberstadt.

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